

## NEWS

# Consumer Organizations Recover Millions in 2018 for Massachusetts Residents

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Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation

Division of Professional Licensure

Division of Insurance

Division of Banks

Division of Standards

Department of Telecommunications and Cable

## MEDIA CONTACT

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**BOSTON** — Today, in celebration of National Consumer Protection Week, the Baker-Polito Administration’s Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation announced more than \$6.7 million dollars was recovered for consumers by the Office and its five regulatory agencies in 2018.

Additionally, the Office and its agencies – Division of Banks, Division of Insurance, Division of Professional Licensure, Division of Standards, and the Department of Telecommunications and Cable – collectively responded to almost 15,000 consumer complaints and inquiries last year. Among the top complaints received in 2018:

- Inappropriate insurance denials and delays in claim processing
- Quality of cable services and billing
- Lemon Law/Auto issues
- Individuals operating without a professional license

National Consumer Protection Week (NCPW) is a nationally coordinated campaign that, for over 20 years, aims to provide consumers with the information they need to empower themselves in the marketplace. During NCPW, consumer protection organizations across the country promote consumer education and highlight how regulators can be effective in holding companies accountable and encouraging fair and reasonable dealings with consumers.

“I’m thrilled to officially assume the role of Undersecretary for the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation during National Consumer Protection Week,” said **Undersecretary Edward A. Palleschi**. “Our agencies are tireless in their efforts to protect consumers and advocate on their behalf, putting over \$20 million back in consumer’s pockets since the start of the Baker-Polito Administration and spearheading several consumer-driven initiatives. I look forward to building upon this great work and continuing to protect and empower consumers across the Commonwealth.”

Key agency-wide initiatives in 2018 include establishing a new Wheelchair Arbitration program for consumers who paid some or all costs out of pocket for their purchase of a new, but defective, customized wheelchair and are refused a refund or replacement wheelchair after meeting eligibility criteria; targeted inspections for motor vehicle repair

shops to ensure registration compliance; and a briefing and leadership forum on elder financial abuse to educate Massachusetts residents on how to identify and prevent elder financial abuse.

At the Governor's request, several of the Office's agencies also engaged in recovery efforts following the gas explosions in Merrimack Valley, processing nearly 500 out-of-state license applications for plumbers and gas fitters from other states to help with the installation of replacement plumbing and gas fitting fixtures and issuing guidance for insurance carriers and banks working with impacted consumers and businesses.

### **About the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation:**

The Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation (OCABR) oversees five regulatory agencies: Division of Banks, Division of Insurance, Division of Professional Licensure, Division of Standards, and the Department of Telecommunications and Cable. The Office works to achieve two goals: to protect and empower consumers through advocacy and education, and to ensure a fair playing field for Massachusetts businesses.

Learn more at [mass.gov/consumer](http://mass.gov/consumer) (<http://mass.gov/consumer>) or follow the Office on [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/MassConsumer) (<http://www.facebook.com/MassConsumer>) and [Twitter](http://www.twitter.com/mass_consumer) ([http://www.twitter.com/mass\\_consumer](http://www.twitter.com/mass_consumer)), [@Mass\\_Consumer](https://twitter.com/Mass_Consumer).

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